



Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Public Works

Date: November 19, 2013

To: Honorable Sandra Colvin Roy, Chair Transportation & Public Works Committee

Referral: Honorable Betsy Hodges, Chair Ways & Means/Budget Committee

Subject: **Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar Master Funding Agreement with Metropolitan Council**

Recommendation:

Authorize the proper City officers to negotiate and enter into a master funding agreement with the Metropolitan Council to conduct environmental review and pre-project development activities for the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar, for an amount not to exceed \$150,000, contingent upon approval of appropriation in the Mayor's Recommended 2014 budget.

Previous Directives:

- October 4, 2013 – City Council approved a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Study and recommended the LPA for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Policy Plan.
- August 16, 2013 – City Council authorized a contract amendment with URS Corporation to complete the NEPA process for the Nicollet-Central Transit Alternatives Study.
- June 25, 2013 – City Council established a project area and value capture district for streetcar financing.
- May 25, 2012 – City Council authorized a contract with URS Corporation to provide professional services to conduct an alternatives analysis in the Nicollet Avenue and Central Ave corridor.
- June 17, 2011 – City Council authorized execution of a subrecipient agreement with the Metropolitan Council to accept a \$900,000 Federal Transit Administration grant and provide a \$300,000 local match to conduct an alternatives analysis for urban circulator transit services in the Nicollet Avenue and Central Avenue corridor.
- April 2, 2010 – City Council approved the long-term streetcar network; authorized staff to engage partner agencies and private stakeholders to determine whether the City should enter into the federal project development process; and directed staff to return to T&PW Committee at least quarterly with a report on streetcars.

Department Information:

Prepared by: Anna Flintoft, Transportation Planner, 673-3885

Approved by: _____

Steven A. Kotke, P.E., Director of Public Works

Presenters in Committee: Anna Flintoft

Financial Impact

- No financial impact

Community Impact

- City Goals: Jobs & Economic Vitality - Planes, trains and streetcars move goods and workers smartly; Strong commercial corridors, thriving business corners. Livable Communities, Healthy Lives - Equitable, integrated transit system.

Supporting Information

On October 4, 2013, the City Council approved a recommended locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the Nicollet-Central Transit Corridor and recommended the LPA to Metropolitan council for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Policy Plan as follows:

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the City Council of the City of Minneapolis that the City of Minneapolis recommends that the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Nicollet-Central Transit Corridor be modern streetcar running between Lake Street and at least 5th Street NE on Nicollet Avenue, Nicollet Mall and Hennepin/1st Avenues, using the Hennepin Avenue bridge to cross the Mississippi River.

Be It Further Resolved that an extension of modern streetcar further northeast of downtown is desirable, the length of which depends on funding availability and the location of an operations and maintenance facility.

Be It Further Resolved that the City of Minneapolis will coordinate with the Metropolitan Council to approve and amend this LPA into the Regional Transportation Policy Plan, to complete an Environmental Assessment and preliminary engineering for the LPA, to negotiate a funding plan, and to negotiate appropriate interagency agreements for the continued implementation of modern streetcar in the Nicollet-Central Corridor.

Several of the implementation activities identified in the above third paragraph are underway:

- The Metropolitan Council is in the process of modifying the Regional Transportation Policy Plan to recognize the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar recommended LPA from the City Council. This process is expected to conclude in late January 2014. A more comprehensive TPP Update is scheduled for late 2014, which is an opportunity to address the role of modern streetcar in the region more comprehensively.

- The City is leading an environmental assessment (EA) for the project in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council and Federal Transit Administration. Consultant work on the EA began this month and conclusion of the environmental review process is expected in Fall 2014. Public engagement will be an important part of the EA process.

It is expected that detailed engineering, implementation and operation of the Nicollet-Central Modern Streetcar will need to be led by the Metropolitan Council. Public Works will agree to reimburse the Met Council for work associated with the first phase of the agreement up to \$150,000. Funding is available in the Mayor's recommended budget for 2014. The recommended interagency agreement is a first step in defining the near-term role of the Metropolitan Council in the EA process, as well as other pre-project development engineering and planning activities necessary to advance the project in the near-term.